Designing Effective Assignments

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Agenda

- Creating Assignments
  - Backward Design
  - Matching Learning Goals
  - Incorporating UDL
  - Variations in Assignment Design
- Evaluating Assignments
Backward Design Process

1. Identify Desired Results.

2. Determine acceptable evidence.

3. Plan learning experiences and instruction.
Matching Learning Goals

DePaul Teaching Commons Website gives examples of assignments for:

- Engage course material
- Think critically
- Reflect on learning and practice
- Communicate effectively
- Think creatively
- Develop scholarly skills
- Develop professional skills
- Work together
- Bridge academic and real world understanding
Incorporating Universal Design

- Design instructions with the user in mind
- Reduce barriers to accessing the assignment
- Establish and articulate an assignment’s goals and objectives and criteria for assessment from the start
- Provide examples
Variations in Assignment Design: An Activity
Discussion Questions

- What differences in thinking processes are apt to be encouraged by each option?

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?

- Which assignment or sequence of assignments would you choose were you the nursing professor?
Designing an Effective Handout

- Task
- Role or Purpose
- Audience
- Format or Genre
- Interactive Components
- Evaluation Criteria
Evaluating Assignments

- Evaluations are learning opportunities for students
  - Summative vs. formative evaluation
  - Formative evaluations should occur throughout assignment

- Did the assignment meet the objectives?
  - Rubrics (analytic assessment)
Arguments Against Rubrics

- Notion of “universal reader”—where in fact different readers read in different ways

- Oversimplification of what is valued

- They look precise and they aren’t (different readers react differently to different rubrics)
Arguments for Rubrics

- Provides structure for students and instructor (serves as a checklist)
- Makes expectations clear

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifies &amp; addresses the main topic in depth (40 pts.)</td>
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<td>Incorporates course topics &amp; material (25 pts.)</td>
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<td>Demonstrates critical thinking (25 pts.)</td>
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<td>Writing quality &amp; clarity (including grammar &amp; spelling) (5 pts.)</td>
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<td>Format (length, double-spaced, followed general guidelines outlined in the paper description) (5 pts.)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
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Providing Feedback

- Provide ongoing feedback and encourage multiple drafts
  - Instructor and peers
  - In-class discussion
  - Individual meetings

Two types of comments (Bean):
- Editing-oriented comments
  - Focus on surface features
- Revision-oriented comments
  - Focus on deeper, higher-order features
  - Preferred method